Applicant(s):	David K. Howington		
Assignee:	Atronic International GmbH (reassigned)		
Title:	System And Method For Casino Management		
Serial No.:	09/981,653	Filing Date:	October 18, 2001
Examiner:	Daniel Lastra	Group Art Unit:	3622
Docket No.:	MIS-P-104	Conf. no.	7566

San Jose, California
November 20, 2007

Mail Stop Appeal Brief
Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPEAL BRIEF PURSUANT TO 37 CFR 41.37

Dear Commissioner:

This Appeal is from the examiner's final rejection, dated December 1, 2006, and from the Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief, dated October 30, 2007. The time period for filing this Appeal Brief is set to be November 30, one month after the mailing date of the Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief.

I.   REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Atronic International GmbH.

II.   RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no related appeals and interferences.

III.   STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 7 and 9-31 are pending and have been rejected. Claims 1-6, 32-36, and 44-55 have been withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a restriction requirement. The remaining Claims 8 and 37-43 have been cancelled.

The rejection of pending Claims 7 and 9-31 is being appealed.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

All amendments have been entered. There have been no amendments after the final office action.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 26 are independent and have a common claim element, which is the focus of the below discussion.

It is conventional that a casino assigns a number on a "placard" to each slot machine, and the placard is affixed to the machine. (See Fig. 2, page 3, lines 8-13.) The placard number can take any form compatible with the casino's database system, since the placard number is used by the casino to identify the particular machine. (Page 9, lines 3-15.) The placard number may also be created by the casino using an accepted standard. (Page 9, lines 7-10.) The prior art casino database could recall the performance data on a slot machine by the computer operator entering the placard number into a computer. (Page 3, lines 11-13.) The data stored for a slot machine typically includes its current location in the casino, the manufacturer's code (serial number) for the machine, and the financial data such as coins in and out, etc. (Page 2, lines 10-18.) If the placard was removed from a first machine and put on a second machine, there is no way the past history of the first machine at a different location could be found (page 3, last 6 lines of page).

The Applicant is not aware of any prior art system for casino management that could identify all slot machines that occupied the same location on the casino floor, by entering the casino floor location code into a database, so their past performance data at that location could be compared. (Page 4, lines 1-3.)

Applicant's computer system (Fig. 9, page 15, line 15) tracks machine history (performance) and location history irrespective of whether the placard has been moved to other machines and moved to other locations in the casino. (Page 6, last three lines, to page 7, line 2; page 10, lines 3-8.)

The placard information (Fig. 2), a location identifier (Fig. 1), and a unique machine identifier (Fig. 3) are entered into the computer system for each slot machine on the casino floor.

(Page 10, lines 8-11.) This may be done manually (via keyboard) or automatically done by the system querying the machines. (Page 10, lines 8-11.)

With Applicant's computer system, for example, the location code in a casino can be entered into the computer by a casino operator, and the identification of every slot machine that had occupied that location is displayed (Fig, 4, sub-window 410; page 10, lines 5-11; page 10, lines 17-23; page 11, lines 1-4). Fig. 4 illustrates, in sub-window 410, three machines (identified by their unique machine identifier) that have been in location MYS.A.001.17. (Page 11, lines 7-11.) Their historical performances can then be easily compared using the machine identifier, shown in Fig. 5. (Page 11, last two lines; page 13, lines 1-8.) The performance of every machine at that location can then be analyzed by the click of a button. This enables the casino to select the best slot machine for a particular location to generate the highest revenue. (Page 12, lines 12-22.)

All independent Claims 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 26 have a limitation similar to the following: "entering a location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier." Additional information about the machines that have been at that same location may then be easily obtained, such as the financial performance of the machines.

All the claims are specifically limited to tracking the history of gaming machines within a casino.

Claim 7 includes the limitations:

tracking within the database a history of the correlation between location, placard and machine identifiers as machines and placards are moved within the casino; and

generating a report based on the tracked history in the database, the report organized according to any of the location identifier, the placard identifier, and the machine identifier, such that entering the location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier....

Claim 16 includes the limitations:

tracking a respective history of each location within a casino, each said second history including a type of game at the location, denomination of the game at the location, and information associated with the location, wherein tracking a respective history of each location comprises entering a location identifier into the database to

generate a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier; ....

Claim 17 includes the limitations:

entering a location identifier into the database to generate a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier and their performance data;

after relocation of the first gaming machine to the second location, evaluating a third performance of the first gaming machine at the second location; and

comparing the first performance and the third performance in order to generate comparative performance data for the first gaming machine according to location within a casino.

Claim 19 includes the limitations:

tracking a relationship between a particular gaming machine and a particular location based on the location identifiers and the machine identifiers, such that entering a location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier;

placing a first gaming machine in a plurality of different locations within the casino;

evaluating a respective performance of the first gaming machine at each of the plurality of different locations; and

locating the first game machine in the casino based on the respective performances.

Claim 20 includes the limitations:

tracking a relationship between a particular gaming machine and a particular location based on the location identifiers and the machine identifiers, such that entering a location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier;

tracking respective additional information about each of different gaming machines at a particular location; and

generating a report providing a comparison of the respective additional information.

Claim 26 includes the limitations:

tracking a relationship between a particular gaming machine and a particular location based on the location identifiers and the machine identifiers, such that entering a location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier;

tracking respective additional information about a particular gaming machine at each of different locations; and

generating a report providing a comparison of the respective additional information.

As seen, all of the independent claims include entering a location identity into the computer database and retrieving the identities of all the slot machines that have been in that location. Since the database also contains the performance of each machine, the relative performances at that single location can be compared to determine the most profitable machine for that location. No prior art casino management system is able to perform that function since all the machines that were all at a particular location cannot be determined by entering the location into a database.

VI. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The ground of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is the rejection of independent Claims 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 26 as being obvious over Applicant's Background of the Invention in view of Blad (US 201/0048374) and further in view of Moore (US 7,084,737)..

VII. ARGUMENT

Rejection of Claims 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 26 Under 35 USC 103

The Background of the Invention section of the application is basically summarized above. The casinos monitor a slot machine's financial performance using a remote monitoring system. The placard number of the machine to be analyzed is entered (e.g., via a keyboard) into the database when information about that machine is desired to be recalled by an operator, and the machine's performance data is then displayed to the operator. In the prior art casino management systems, there is no simple way to track the performances of all slot machines that have occupied the same location on the casino floor, as described in the specification at the bottom of page 3 and top of page 4.

The examiner cites **Blad** for its teaching of monitoring coin-operated machines using a remote computer and codes associated with each machine. Applicant acknowledges that it is prior art for slot machines to transmit <u>performance</u> data to a central server. However, neither Blad nor

the Background of the Invention suggests that a location identifier may be used to identify all slot machines that have occupied that same location in a casino. Blad is unconcerned about the past physical location of the machine. In the Advisory Action, the examiner cited to Blad's paragraphs 0049-0050 for teaching how users can access the Blad database via the Internet and query and filter raw data to obtain information about the machines. The examiner contends that this information would include information that would allow the user to easily identify all the coin-operated machines that have occupied the same location. The pertinent portions of Blad's paragraphs 0049-0050 state:

> Central site 112 also includes a web server 120 which runs active queries on the data within database 118 and posts the results of the queries on a secure web page 122 for viewing by authorized individuals. ... Web page 122 may be designed for either passive mode (i.e., the user can only view data) or active mode wherein the user may change filters, structure queries, or otherwise manipulate the data present on web page 122. Ideally, web page 122 should be designed so that a user may view data for either individual coin-operated machines 102, or for a plurality of coin-operated machines 102.

The "data" within the Blad database (at the "central site 112) is the data automatically generated and transmitted by the coin-operated machines, not the current and past locations of the machines, since the machines themselves do not know where they are. Paragraph 0047 states that the "data typically contains a machine ID, a time stamp, coin drop information, or other similar information from the remote coin-operated machines 102...." Nowhere is it suggested in Blad that current and past locations of the machines are stored in the database and can be easily accessed using the database to allow someone to just enter a location and see all the machines that have occupied that same location so the respective performances of the machines can be compared to each other.

The examiner cites **Moore** for its teaching of using a GPS locator on vending machines to track their locations. Moore is directed to vending machines that vend products. A customer selects a desired product at a first vending machine. If the desired product is depleted in the first vending machine, the Moore system automatically determines the closest vending machine that has the desired product and conveys the location to the customer so the customer can then travel to the other vending machine to buy the product. The examiner cites to sections of Moore showing that Moore tracks the **present** locations of vending machines.

The examiner essentially stated that it would be obvious to track the locations of the Blad machines, as taught by Moore, and then to allow the users to selectively filter the data collected from the machines to easily identify all machines that have occupied a particular location. Applicant responds that this modification to Blad would require that each of the Blad machines include a GPS locator to transmit its current location to the database, where the database then keeps a permanent record of all the **past and current locations** of each machine while allowing the user to simply enter a location into the database to easily find out all the machines that have occupied a certain single location.

There is no suggestion for the above-mentioned modification of the Blad system. Blad himself saw no reason for the data at the central site 112, accessible by the user, to include even the current location of the machine. Moore is **only** concerned about the **current** locations of the vending machines and would not logically enable one to easily find all the vending machines that have occupied the same location, since that would be irrelevant.

One aspect of the invention is the nonobvious realization that it is valuable to a casino to be easily able to identify all slot machines that have occupied the same particular location. Such a function is not provided by the prior art casino management systems, which track performance entering a placard number (affixed to each machine) into a database.

It is respectfully submitted that the combination of the Background of the Invention systems and the Blad, and Moore systems would only be concerned with the **present** locations of the machines, and any database used by a modified Blad system would not enable the user to easily identify all machines that have occupied the same location. There is no motivation provided by Blad and Moore for a database that identifies all the machines that have previously occupied a location by entering the desired location into the database. Further, the Moore invention is unrelated to slot machines since it is directed to telling the customer where the closest product can be found when the first vending machine is out of the product. That is the only purpose for Moore monitoring the present locations of the machines. The examiner is using impermissible hindsight in identifying one aspect of Moore, out of context, and using it to modify other prior art in an attempt to piece together Applicant's claims. Nevertheless, even when all the prior art are combined, the most that is achieved is a way to identify the **current** machine at a particular location.

The examiner is reminded that casino tracking databases are highly customized and directed to monitoring the present performance of many different types of slot machines at their **current**

locations. It is not obvious to add the claimed feature to the casino tracking systems since the claimed feature is related to identifying past performances of slot machines at old locations. Since Applicant's inventions provide a new function which is not suggested by the prior art combination, it could not be obvious to modify the prior art combination to provide the new function.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are allowable. If the Examiner has any questions, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at 408-382-0480 x202.

Respectfully submitted,

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VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. (withdrawn) A casino management method comprising the steps of:

collecting patron data, for each of a plurality of patrons, throughout a casino using respective patron cards;

storing said patron data in a data warehouse;

analyzing said patron data; and

determining one or more incentives for each of the plurality of patrons based on the analysis of said patron data.

2. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein the one or more incentives includes at least one of: gaming coupons, discounted airfare, restaurant coupons, discounted fares for activities at a resort affiliated with the casino; and incentives for another casino affiliated with the casino.

3. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of collecting patron data is performed by a magnetic card reader located at each of a plurality of games in the casino.

4. (withdrawn) A casino management method for tracking and managing data related to operation of a casino including the steps of:

tracking and managing gaming activity within a casino;

tracking and managing patron data, for each of a plurality of patrons, throughout a casino using respective patron cards, said patron data comprising: (a) club points associated with a particular patron; (b) comps associated with the particular patron; (c) preferences associated with the particular patron; and (d) other activity of the particular patron in a resort affiliated with the casino, in response to a query regarding the patron data, generating a report of selected patron data.

5. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein the preferences include personal preferences, family preferences, and group preferences.

6. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein the preferences include travel

preferences, cocktail preferences, and hotel preferences.

7. (previously presented) A casino management method for tracking history of gaming machines and casino locations using a computer system, comprising the steps of:

assigning a respective location identifier to each location within a casino;

associating a respective machine placard, having a placard identifier, with each machine within the casino;

associating a respective machine identifier with each machine within the casino;

storing the location identifier, placard identifier, and machine identifier in a database;

tracking within a the database a history of the correlation between location, placard and machine identifiers as machines and placards are moved within the casino; and

generating a report based on the tracked history in the database, the report organized according to any of the location identifier, the placard identifier, and the machine identifier, such that entering the location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier, entering the placard identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been associated with the placard identifier, and entering the machine identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that correspond with the machine identifier.

8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein the report simultaneously display historical data organized according to location identifier, placard identifier and machine identifier.

10. (original) The method according to claim 7, further comprising the step of: acquiring respective performance data associated with each machine within the casino.

11. (original) The method according to claim 10, further comprising the step of: determining and reporting a historical performance of different gaming machines at a particular location in the

casino.

12. (original) The method according to claim 11, further comprising the steps of: organizing locations within a casino into one or more zones; and determining and reporting a historical performance of a particular zone within the casino.

13. (original) The method according to claim 10, further comprising the step of: determining and reporting a historical performance of a particular gaming machine at different locations in the casino.

14. (original) The method according to claim 10, further comprising the step of: determining and reporting a historical performance of different machines associated with a particular placard identifier.

15. (original) The method according to claim 10, wherein performance data includes one or more of coin in, jackpot, win/loss, par % and act %.

16. (previously presented) A casino management method, using a computer system and a database, that tracks history of a plurality of gaming machines and casino locations, comprising the steps of:

tracking a respective first history of each gaming machine in a casino, each said first history including changes in location of the machine within the casino, changes in machine configuration, and machine performance;

tracking a respective history of each location within a casino, each said second history including a type of game at the location, denomination of the game at the location, and information associated with the location, wherein tracking a respective history of each location comprises entering a location identifier into the database to generate a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier;

exchanging placards among the plurality of gaming machines while maintaining tracking of the first and second histories, said placards comprising a unique placard associated with each of the gaming machines.

17. (previously presented) A casino management method, using a computer system and a database, for evaluating machine and location performances, comprising the steps of:

evaluating a first performance of a first gaming machine at a first location;

evaluating a second performance of a second gaming machine at a second location;

entering a location identifier into the database to generate a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier and their performance data;

after relocation of the first gaming machine to the second location, evaluating a third performance of the first gaming machine at the second location; and

comparing the first performance and the third performance in order to generate comparative performance data for the first gaming machine according to location within a casino.

18. (original) The method according to claim 17, further comprising the steps of: associating a respective location identifier with each location within the casino; associating a respective machine identifier with each gaming machine within the casino; and using the location identifiers and the machine identifiers associated with the first and second gaming machines and the first and second locations when tracking said first, second and third performances.

19. (previously presented) A casino management method, using a computer system and a database, for evaluating performance of different gaming machines and locations within a casino, comprising the steps of:

associating a respective location identifier with each of a plurality of locations within the casino;

associating a respective machine identifier with each of a plurality of gaming machines within the casino;

tracking a relationship between a particular gaming machine and a particular location based on the location identifiers and the machine identifiers, such that entering a location identifier into

the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier;

placing a first gaming machine in a plurality of different locations within the casino;

evaluating a respective performance of the first gaming machine at each of the plurality of different locations; and

locating the first game machine in the casino based on the respective performances.

20. (previously presented) A casino management method, using a computer system and a database, for evaluating performance of different gaming machines and locations within a casino, comprising the steps of:

associating a respective location identifier with each of a plurality of locations within the casino;

associating a respective machine identifier with each of a plurality of gaming machines within the casino;

tracking a relationship between a particular gaming machine and a particular location based on the location identifiers and the machine identifiers, such that entering a location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier;

tracking respective additional information about each of different gaming machines at a particular location; and

generating a report providing a comparison of the respective additional information.

21. (original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the respective additional information relates to revisions of the different gaming machines.

22. (original) The method according to claim 21, wherein revisions include one or more of location movements, glass changes, software changes, peripheral additions and changes, location in/out of service changes, gaming machine in/out of service changes, maintenance changes, and alarm

conditions.

23. (original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the respective additional information relates to gaming machine characteristics and player characteristics.

24. (original) The method according to claim 23, wherein: gaming machine characteristics includes one or more of game type, game denomination, and game location; and player characteristics includes one or more of group, age, sex, status and club level.

25. (original) The method according to claim 20, wherein the respective additional information relates to different patron playing performance in a predetermined time frame.

26. (previously presented) A casino management method, using a computer system and a database, for evaluating performance of different gaming machines and locations within a casino, comprising the steps of:

associating a respective location identifier with each of a plurality of locations within the casino;

associating a respective machine identifier with each of a plurality of gaming machines within the casino;

tracking a relationship between a particular gaming machine and a particular location based on the location identifiers and the machine identifiers, such that entering a location identifier into the database generates a report identifying machines that have been located at the location corresponding to the location identifier;

tracking respective additional information about a particular gaming machine at each of different locations; and

generating a report providing a comparison of the respective additional information.

27. (original) The method according to claim 26, wherein the respective additional information relates to revisions of the different gaming machines.

28. (original) The method -according to claim 27, wherein revisions include one or more of location movements, glass changes, software changes, peripheral additions and changes, location in/out of service changes, gaming machine in/out of service changes, maintenance changes, and alarm conditions.

29. (original) The method according to claim 26, wherein the respective additional information relates to gaming machine characteristics and player characteristics.

30. (original) The method according to claim 29, wherein: gaming machine characteristics includes one or more of game type, game denomination, and game location; and player characteristics includes one or more of group, age, sex, status and club level.

31. (original) The method according to claim 26, wherein the respective additional information relates to different patron playing performance in a predetermined time frame.

32. (withdrawn) A visual analysis method comprising the steps of:

      acquiring gaming machine data;

      providing for sorting of the acquired gaming machine data; and

      presenting the acquired gaming machine data in a table with multiple thin bar graphs.

33. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 32, wherein the sorted data is presented.

34. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 32, wherein the gaming machine data relates to the operating performance of the machine.

35. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 32, wherein the step of sorting is performed based on one or more of a placard identifier, a machine identifier, and a location identifier; each of said identifiers associated with a respective one of a plurality of gaming machines in a casino.

36. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 32, wherein the table presents the thin bar graphs allowing side-by-side comparison of a first gaming machine and a second gaming machine.

37-43. (cancelled)

44. (withdrawn) A visual analysis method comprising the steps of:

acquiring respective gaming machine data for each of a plurality of gaming machines in a casino, said gaming machine data having at least three separate components;

generating a plurality of three-dimensional icons, each icon corresponding to one of the plurality of gaming machines;

for each particular generated icon: associating a first component of the corresponding gaming machine data with a first color of a side of the particular icon; associating a second component of the corresponding gaming machine data with a second color of a top of the particular icon, and associating a third component of the corresponding gaming machine data with a size of the particular icon, and simultaneously displaying the plurality of three-dimensional icons such that the respective first, second and third components are visually discernable.

45. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 44, further comprising the step of: arranging the display of the plurality of three-dimensional icons to correspond to a physical layout of the plurality of gaming machines within the casino.

46. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 44, wherein the gaming machine data includes performance, denomination, alarm conditions, manufacturer.

47. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 46, wherein alarm conditions include any of an alarm, alarm category, and alarm type.

48. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 44, further comprising the steps of: associating a respective location identifier with each of a plurality of locations within the casino; associating a respective machine identifier with each of the plurality of gaming machines within the casino; tracking a relationship between a particular gaming machine and a particular location based on the location identifiers and the machine identifiers.

49. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 48, further comprising the step of: based on the tracked relationship, arranging the display of the plurality of three-dimensional icons to correspond to a physical layout of the plurality of gaming machines.

50. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 44, further comprising the step of: adjusting a viewing angle of the display of the plurality of three-dimensional icons so as to emphasize one of the first, second and third components.

51. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 44, further comprising the steps of: acquiring respective patron data for one or more of the plurality of gaming machines; and in response to one of the displayed three-dimensional icons being selected, displaying the respective patron data.

52. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 51, wherein the patron data includes a picture of the patron.

53. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 51, further comprising the steps of: determining from the respective patron data, a set of the displayed three-dimensional icons, said set of icons corresponding to those gaming machines being played by a patron matching a predetermined criteria, and automatically displaying, in sequence, the set of icons.

54. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 44, wherein the size of the particular icon is the height of the particular icon.

55. (withdrawn) The visual analysis method of claim 44 further comprising the steps of: determining from the respective gaming machine data, a set of displayed three-dimensional icons, said set of icons corresponding to those gaming machines experiencing an alarm condition, and automatically displaying, in sequence, the set of icons.

IX. EVIDENCE APPENDIX

There is no evidence in this appendix.

X.   RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

There are no related proceedings in this appendix.